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ABSTRACT

In June, 1977, a 2-week tie-dyeing and batik training program was undertaken for 12 Malian community development workers by a newly formed cooperative of urban dyers in Gambia. Need for income-producing activity for women in the Bambara regions of rural Mali led to a decision to promote cloth processing and in 1974 training sessions were held in dyeing methods using indigo, mud, and chemical dyes. Unlike deliberate efforts in Mali to create income-producing activity, Gambian businesswomen in the 1960s had perceived cloth processing as a new and exploitable market. In addition to pattern techniques, Malians studied Gambian use of dyes and color. Tie-dye trainees practiced on one yard cloth pieces and created sample pattern books to use as teaching tools in Mali. Two trainees spent three weeks at a batik workshop learning the basics of that craft, entirely new to them. Gambian designs began appearing in Mali within two months of the trainees' return, training programs were set up in several districts, and plans were underway to improve communications and quality control. Gambian dyers gained a sense of satisfaction and prestige from their roles as teachers, and a beginning realization of the benefits that can accrue from group action. (BRR)

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New Skills for Rural Women

Report of a Training Program for Twelve Malian Community Development Workers held in Banjul, The Gambia

June 7 - 15, 1977

Susan L. Caughman

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The author, Susan Caughman, with Yaye M'Bai Gaye, a Gambian teacher in the training program.

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Introduction

This report describes a tie-dyeing and batik training program organized in June, 1977 by the Women and Development Program of the American Friends Service Committee in Banjul, The Gambia. Undertaken at the request of representatives of the Malian Ministry of Rural Development, the purpose of the program was to increase the earning capacity, and thus the incomes, of women associated with eight rural community development centers in Mali. The program sought to improve the technical dyeing skills of twelve community development workers representing the eight centers each of which includes cloth production as part of an integrated program of health and education activities. Upon return to Mali, participants were charged with teaching their newly learned skills to the roughly 100 members involved with the centers.

A newly formed cooperative of urban dyers in Banjul, the Gambian Artisans Marketing Cooperative, was responsible for teaching the advanced dyeing techniques. A further objective of the program was to enhance the cohesiveness of this cooperative by providing its members with an opportunity to work and plan together. Finally, implicit in the training program was the desire to facilitate exchanges of experience and skills across national and linguistic barriers by taking advantage of mutually intelligible languages, Malian Bambara and Gambian Mandinka.

Set out below is a background discussion of the role of cloth dyeing and production as a revenue-producing activity for women in Mali and The Gambia and a description of the origin, preparation and implementation of the tie-dyeing training program. A detailed description of daily activities during the program is found in an appendix to this report. It is hoped that others concerned with economic change for rural women, cottage industries as a source of income, training or the mounting of similar cross-national exchanges of skills for rural women will find this report useful.

The AFSC Women and Development Program, staffed by Susan Caughman and Gerry Goodrich and based in Dakar, Sénégal, began in November 1976. Focused on Mali, Sénégal, The Gambia and Guiné-Bissau, it provides technical and financial support to existing and newly formed women's groups with the aim of raising their families' standards of living. Attempting to respond flexibly to the needs of women and women's groups, the AFSC program is based on the desire to bolster West African women's own efforts, and to assure that the control of women's programs remains in the hands of those designed to benefit from them.

Background Mali

In the Bambara regions of rural Mali significant sexual divisions exist in the family economy: men and women have separate sources of income and different family responsibilities.[1] To oversimplify, while the male head of household is responsible for the family staple, usually millet, women provide most other foodstuffs and household necessities such as salt, kerosene and clothes. Women also often contribute toward school costs and medicines. In this situation increases in men's incomes, resulting from the introduction of cash crops or wage labor, for example, do not necessarily result in improved living standards for women and children. In fact, as many authors are now pointing out,[2] such changes often negatively affect women and children, as, simultaneously, men are drawn out of the traditional family economy and women are left with increased responsibilities but no new means of satisfying them.

Given the essentially segregated nature of rural family economies, the resources managed by women must increase if overall family well-being is to be affected. At present women's incomes in rural Mali are extremely low. They derive largely from the sale of vegetables grown in their gardens and from a variety of processing activities: spinning cotton into thread; dyeing cloth with indigo, kola and mud; production of shea butter, soap, basketry and pottery. Assuming the continuation of the economy as presently structured, finding ways to increase women's productivity becomes, then, a major challenge to those interested in a development process which benefits the poor.

Under the Malian Ministry of Rural Development attempts to integrate women into the rural development process have led to the establishment of a range of programs including health and nutrition, child care, functional literacy, poultry raising and market gardening. These have been organized under several different administrative structures. The Rural Animation Centers (CARs), established in 1960, provide two years of agricultural training for young male farmers. In 1970 it was decided to include the wives of these farmers: a program composed of a number of the subjects mentioned above, as well as some limited agricultural training, was initiated for women.[3]

Since 1972 the Community Development Centers (CDCs) of Operation Riz, Segou, have also administered programs directed toward women. Operation Riz is a major semi-autonomous agricultural development program established to increase national rice production. Five Community Development Centers, located in key production areas throughout the Operation Riz zone, reach the village population (especially youth and women) through training volunteer workers in first aid, nutrition, and hygienic childbirth techniques as well as a number of other activities organized at individual centers.[4]

The staff of both the CAR and CDC programs found that restrictions on women's free time and their low incomes prevented them from improving household conditions and nutrition practices as suggested at the centers. With women's attention focussed by necessity on providing the family's basic needs, family care projects attracted little or no interest.

In 1972 Petronella van den Oever, assigned to the women's training component of the CARs by the Food and Agriculture Organization from 1971-1975, and Mariam Thiam, head of training for women under the National Direction of Rural Education and Animation, began a search for ways to increase rural women's incomes. Constraints on the availability of water severely limited the possibilities for successful market garden and poultry projects. After an evaluation of women's economic activities they initiated a program for the production and sale of processed cloth in a number of rural centers.[5]

For several reasons cloth processing was a sound choice. In the last decade cloth brightly dyed with imported chemical dyes has become increasingly popular in West Africa and a considerable market for it exists. Dyeing with vegetable dyes is,as well, a traditionally accepted women's activity. Further, dyeing requires only modest initial expenses and involves no advanced technology. Unlike market gardening, for example, dyeing can be carried on throughout the year, integrated into daily schedules as time allows. Considering the many constraints on the rural economy, dyeing offers a significant opportunity for rural, illiterate women to supplement a family income based largely on agriculture.[6]

In 1974 and 1975 training sessions were held for community development workers from the CARs in dyeing methods using indigo, mud and chemical dyes. This group of newly trained animatrices then taught women at the Centers in Oullessebougou, Sirakorola, and Yangasso. In 1974, the Community Development Program of Operation Riz held its first dyeing training program for twenty women at the Center at San. Later the program was extended to the four other Community Development Centers.

Another dyeing group emerged in 1975 when women in Markala formed a pilot artisanal center with the help of Mrs. Thiam. This cooperative, a private initiative of the women involved, is completely self-managed. The members hired experienced women dyers to train them, designed their own system of time organization and work allocation and elected a governing administrative council. Though the Markala Center offers health education and functional literacy classes, its primary purpose is to increase the skills and incomes of its members.

With dyeing activities underway in these rural centers after 1975, a number of problems in quality control, management and marketing remained.[7] First, it became clear that all the production could not be sold in the same rural areas in which they were produced. Although tie-dyed cloth is favored by many Malians it is often too expensive for many rural women. Those concerned with dyeing in Mali met in late 1975 and decided to open a small center for the commercialization of rural products in Bamako. This center, which opened in 1976, also began buying dyes in bulk for distribution to the rural producers. Communication and coordination between Bamako and the rural groups, while considerably improved, remains difficult. Further, the isolation and inexperience of the dyers, their limited training and lack of exposure to new styles and techniques have made adaptation and improvements in their production difficult. Quality control was limited in the absence of similar cloth against which they could measure their production.

By early 1977, the need for upgraded skills was evident if the output of rural centers was to compete with cloth imported from the Ivory Coast and Sierra Leone or that produced by Bamako businesswomen.

In April 1977 Mrs. Mariam Thiam visited Banjul with Valerie Kelly, an American community development worker with considerable experience in aspects of the cloth industry in Mali, and myself. Noticing the proficiency of skills, the vibrancy of color and the marketing techniques used by Gambian women, she proposed a training program in The Gambia to provide new skills and ideas for Malian dyers.

After discussions with the Gambian Artisans Marketing Cooperative (see below), Mrs. Thiam returned to Bamako on April 13 with an invitation from the AFSC to the Minister of Rural Development to send a delegation of dyers for training in Banjul in June. The invitation stressed that participants would be expected to teach their newly acquired skills to members of their groups upon return to Mali.

In early May in discussions in Bamako with Mrs. Thiam and Mrs. Aminata Diawara, head of the Community Development Program of Operation Riz, it was decided to study marketing, quality control, consistency of results in dyeing as well as adding to the dyers repertoire of designs in Banjul. We scheduled practical training by the Gambian dyers in the mornings and afternoon sessions on marketing, quality control, etc. Mrs. Thiam and Mrs. Diawara decided to accompany the ten trainees to Banjul to study the formation and functioning of the Gambian cooperative as they hoped that the Bamako commercialization center might provide services similar to GAMCO.

We also agreed that to be successful the program should be carried out as far as possible in ways capatible with the financial resources and experiences of rural Malians in order to minimize the dislocation of being in a different culture. Only one participant had ever previously left Mali. Their French language skills are limited. Most were apprehensive about the food they would find in Banjul. For these reasons the program was planned so that trainees would travel by a familiar mode, the train (although a train strike in Sénégal at the last moment obliged the delegation to fly to Banjul), that they would communicate in their own languages as much as possible, and that they would be guests in Gambian homes -- where the food proved excellent and the Malians put very much at their ease. In retrospect it seems to us that careful consideration of the style in which the program took place significantly facilitated the training itself.

Background: The Gambia

As indicated above, the Malian women involved in the training program have taken up dyeing in order to supplement their essentially agriculturally-based incomes. In contrast, the Gambian participants are all urban businesswomen for whom dyeing is an active occupation and a primary source of revenue.

The Wolof and Mandinka women of the Banjul area who participated in this training program began their commerce in chemically dyed cloth quite differently from their Malian counterparts. In both countries indigo dyed cloth has long been a source of revenue for women, but one which declined in importance during the colonial period when cheaper printed cottons became available and popular. Chemically dyed cloth seems to have begun appearing in Banjul in the 1950's from Sierra Leone as a

result of a variety of social and economic links between Banjul and Freetown. In the 1960's demand for these new styles of cloth expanded rapidly among wealthier Banjul women and among tourists who were arriving in increasing numbers. In the face of this demand, Banjul women deliberately sought out and learned the new, marketable dyeing skills. Several travelled to Freetown for apprenticeships of up to six months with Sierra Leonean dyers. On their return, this group often taught family members or, for a fee, took on students. Other Banjul women apprenticed themselves to older women of the Susu and Sarakole ethnic groups (traditionally reknowned dyers)to learn techniques of needlework, wrapping and folding cloth. Most women agreed that six months to a year was required to master the basic skills involved. In conclusion Banjul women perceived a new and exploitable market and showed shrewd economic sense in responding to it. This response was essentially an individual, market-oriented one: unlike the rural Malian situation, it was not the result of deliberate efforts to create income producing activity for women.

Banjul dyers function in a highly competitive and individualistic market. Working with limited capital, they compete for the same clients often from neighbouring stalls, and buy their supplies (dyes, cloth, caustic soda and hydrosulfite) from the same sources. This competition demands a relatively high and consistent quality of cloth production. It also results in attempt by dyers to attractively display their wares. On the other hand, this competition results in high costs for raw materials purchased individually and in small quantities, low prices and small profit margins. Until very recently this competitive environment mitigated against group or collective action.[8]

Parallel to the group of Banjul women dyers who produce primarily for the tourist market, a separate traditional dyeing economy exists. Sarakolé have long played an important role in the production and trade of indigo dyed cloth for the local consumption throughout this part of West Africa. With tightly knit economic and social communities, the Sarakolé have well-established divisions of labor in cloth production.[9] Generally, men tie, wrap or sew the cloth while women control the preparation of the indigo dye bath and the dyeing process. The finished product is sold by both men and women and profits divided among them. Increasingly the Sarakolé dyers have turned to imported cloth and chemical dyes as the market for these goods emerged among lower income groups.[10]

While the urban tie-dyers of Banjul and the Sarakolé generally do not compete for the same clients, commercial connections between the two groups do exist. Mandinka and Wolof women often commission Sarakolé men on a piece work basis to tie or sew cloth in difficult patterns, cloth which the women then dye and sell themselves. Relying on the presence of skilled Sarakolé dyers in this way, Wolof and Mandinka women expand their range of designs and patterns as well as the volume of cloth they sell.

In 1976 the Indigenous Business Advisory Service (IBAS), a joint program of the United Nations/ILO and the Gambian Ministry of Economic Planning and Industrial Development, began to organize Gambian artisans. As a result, in the Spring of 1977 The Gambian Artisans Marketing Co-Operative Ltd. (GAMCO) was formed. As stated in its brochure " the purpose of GAMCO

is to generate greater income and more employment opportunities for Gambian artisans." GAMCO hopes to provide assistance to its members through the following activities:

"(1) Domestic and export marketing, by arranging for and setting up local retail outlets, establishing conta cts and channels with overseas buyers, etc.;
(2) Product development, including quality control of workmanship and materials,&product design to meet consumer demands in the international market;
(3) Product promotion and advertising;
(4) Raw material supply, by purchasing in bulk quantities to ensure constant sources of dependable quality at the lowest possible cost;
(5) Training in both craft production techniques and business management skills;
(6) Financing, in the form of material and equipment loans or cash where GAMCO is unable to act as supplier;
(7) Communication among Gambian Artisans and between CAMCO members and artisans in other countries through personnel exchanges and participation in exhibitions and trade fairs."[11]

While GAMCO works with a range of artisans in The Gambia -- leatherworkers, weavers, jewelers, batik producers--the urban women tie-dyers of greater Banjul constitute its large membership group. Susanna Badgley, an American woman working with IBAS, and Isatu N'jie, seconded to IBAS from the Gambian Ministry of Economic Planning and Industrial Development, worked with the tie-dyers last year and thus with the AFSC sponsored Malian-Gambian exchange.

During 1976 and 1977 Susanna Badgley and Isatu N'Jie had undertaken the time-consuming task of explaining the cooperative's purposes to the many potential members. In addition to drawing up the cooperative statutes, the GAMCO staff and Executive Committee members also explored export possibilities, established a quality control committee, and researched possible product designs. With the cooperative still in its very early stages few direct benefits had accrued to members, though in March 1977, CAMCO organized a fashion show and sale which produced publicity and sales for participating dyers.

In this formative period GAMCO staff and committee members were interested in ways of attracting interest to the cooperative and thus responded positively to inquiries about GAMCO participation in a training program for Malians during our April visit to Banjul. They felt that in organizing a training program the Gambian tie-dyers would gain a sense of collaboration and common purpose and,perhaps, publicity for the new cooperative. In addition the Malians proposed to display their traditional mudcloth and to explore possible return exchanges. After discussion the GAMCO executive committee (staff and three tie-dyers) agreed to host the Malian dyers and plan a teaching program for them. The AFSC undertook financial and administrative support for the effort. (see appendix III: statement of expenses) The Gambian Ministry of Economic Planning and Industrial Development agreed to GAMCO's participation.

Program Planning

Meetings were held in Banjul during May to plan the training program. GAMCO Committee members, who had agreed to sponsor the program without full, prior discussion with cooperative members, found that the idea of teaching strangers their valuable skills aroused considerable controversy among the dyers. At a series of meetings long debates ensued. One group felt strongly that teaching trade secrets to outsiders (whoever they might be) would only undermine their own businesses. Others argued that Gambians themselves had learned from other African women and it was only fitting that they should in turn pass on their skills. Everyone agreed that to teach ten Malian women was to teach hundreds. The argument that Mali was distant and therefore that competition would be unlikely, carried little weight. Those who decided to participate seem to have done so because they believed that teaching others who need an income is an honorable activity, and that becoming known as a teacher could bring recognition and possibly financial success. As Mrs. Ami Kurbally, GAMCO Committee member and batik teacher, explained on a Radio Gambia broadcast about the training program, "I myself had no way to earn a living before I learned skills to support my relatives and children. Therefore if someone like me leaves her country to come in search of my knowledge, I should teach her what I know so that she too can support her relatives."[12]

Another area of considerable discussion concerned remuneration for participation in the training program. While one group felt that, in the spirit of cooperation, they should teach for only a token fee, the majority felt that it was only appropriate that they be paid more than nominally for their work. This group cited the fact that most of the Gambians had paid substantial sums of money to learn to dye. The dyers agreed on a price of 15 Dalasis (about $7) per teacher for a morning training session. While far from an unreasonable sum, the payment was no doubt a factor in the decision of some members to teach.

Although a substantial number of Gambians agreed to teach the visiting Malians, other women in Banjul remained skeptical about the training program. Several of the Gambian teachers reported being roundly criticized for their participation by friends met at the market or in town during the program. Interestingly, some of this skepticism stemed from rumors that the training program was for Europeans who would then stop buying cloth in The Gambia. With the airing of a June 19 radio program in which Gambian and Malian participants described the goals of the program in Wolof and Bambara many of these misconceptions dissipated. (see Appendix IV)

By the time the Malians left Banjul, attributes toward the program had changed dramatically: those dyers who had not participated complained of their exclusion; those who had taught extolled the experience and had plans for how to improve the training next time. Personal contacts with the Malian visitors had dispelled notions of potential competition and friendships were established among the two groups of women. The Gambian Mandinka families seemed particularly to sense a bond with their fellow Mande speakers from Mali.

Anticipating all these attitudinal differences prior to the program was probably impossible; still, a fuller discussion of the situation of

of the rural Malian dyers by AFSC staff and Malian representatives with all the participating Gambian dyers in the earliest stages of program planning would have been a preferable course. The Gambian women earn only a modest income and reluctance to share knowledge about the source of their revenue is only sensible. Although ten days had been allotted for preparation in The Gambia before the arrival of the Malian delegation, additional time there could have been well spent in discussions about the pros and cons of teaching and also on logistical and administrative details which required considerably more time than anticipated.

The Training Program - Summary

The program took place from June 7 to June 15,1977. The Gambian trainers each selected different patterns to teach and two or three came to the training site each morning on a scheduled basis. Each worked with a group of three or four Malian trainees. It was quickly apparent that there was insufficient time to learn three dyeing techniques a day and have afternoon sessions in marketing and management. The Malians therefore chose to concentrate on dyeing techniques, afternoon sessions being used for that purpose as well. Excursions to markets and dyeing workshops enabled the Malians to see something of Gambian marketing techniques but with the tourist season completed the markets were in less than their full color.

In addition to pattern techniques, the Malians studied Gambian use of dyes and color, methods quite different from those employed in Mali. The tie-dye trainees practiced on cloth pieces of one yard and created sample pattern books to use as teaching tools in Mali. Two of the Malians, secected by Mrs. Thiam and Mrs. Diawara for their drawing ability, passed their entire Gambia stay (including a week more than other participants) at a batik workshop learning the basics of that craft, entirely new to them.

Mrs. Thiam and Mrs. Diawara attended a GAMCO Executive Committee meeting at which plans for opening a retail shop were discussed. They watched a quality control session and saw some of the products developed to diversify GAMCO stock.

At the end of theMalians' stay in Banjul, GAMCO members organized a reception in their honor with displays of Gambian tie-dye and Malian mudcloth. This reception, attended by all the participants and important GAMCO supporters from the Banjul area, generated newspaper and radio publicity for the cooperative and contributed to GAMCO's attempts to have dyeing recognized as a serious art and an important commercial activity in The Gambia.

The Malian delegation left The Gambia by road, arriving in Dakar on June 15. After a one day stay in Dakar during which they visited the Institut de Technologie Alimentaire (a research center on processing of local foods), they returned to Mali.

Postscript - Mali

Although it is still to soon to evaluate the long-term benefits of the training program, there is already evidence that the new techniques are being practiced. In August, just two months after the training program, cloth using Gambian designs and colors was available in the Bamako outlet from two different participating rural centers. Most of this cloth had been produced by group members who had not been in Banjul but who had been taught by one of the training program participants; most of this new cloth was immediately sold. One tie-dye training program is underway at the nomadic settlement of Tin Aicha in the 6th Region of Mali, organized there by a returned participant; another is planned for November in the village of Sirakorola as an upgrading course for women previously trained in the CARs. AFSC staff plans follow-up visits to the other centers in the near future to continue evaluation of the Banjul training program. Tangible evidence of increased sales will be measurable through the accounts of the Bamako outlet.

The most significant aspect of the Malian cloth production program is that it remains completely an initiative of Malian women. In August Malian women organized a Bamako meeting for representatives from all rural development programs involved in the handicraft program. At this meeting plans were laid to improve communications between the retail center in Bamako and the rural production centers around the country, to implement quality control standards and procedures, and to investigate training a Malian woman as bookkeeper for an expanding Bamako center. Plans to begin batik production at Markala and San were described to the group. Working with few resources, and at their own pace, this group of women have created and control a program which meets their needs for increased income.

Postscript - The Gambia

In discussions with participating dyers after the training program in late June, it was clear that most had gained a sense of satisfaction and prestige from their roles as teachers. They also seem to have begun to realize that benefits can accrue from group action which are not available to them individually.

GAMCO members are currently steeped in theplanning for their new retail store which is to open before the next tourist season. They have received a grant and loan to renovate and stock the store which is strategically located in the area of tourist hotels. Susanna Badgley's successor, Rana Harmon, is currently involved with fashion and fabric design, helping GAMCO dyers produce cloth and clothing most marketable to European tourists. The Banjul dyers seem increasingly interested and involved in the progress of the cooperative as a sharper perception of its potential benefits to them emerges.

Conclusion

This tie-dye training program sought to increase the earning capacities of rural women in Mali by providing them with practical and marketable skills. Several factors about it are noteworthy:

* The program was initiated in response to needs identified by the trainers who, involved in tie-dyeing for several years previously, had a clear stake in learning new skills.
* Training was designed and adapted by the participants to provide the required skills.
* Most importantly, the training program fit into a pre-existing administrative structure which encourages the individuals trained to pass on to others their newly acquired skills.
* Finally this ten-day training program is best understood, not as a disconnected effort, but in the context of a continuing process of development activity for rural women in Mali.

Tie-dyeing is currently providing an income for certain women in rural Mali. However, much research and innovation is needed into other ways to increase income for rural women in West Africa. While programs must, of necessity, be tailored to local situations, one important area of women's activity meriting attention is post-harvest food processing. Research done in Sénégal, for example, into use of millet flour in bread production, suggest possible small business activity for women's groups in the Sahel. Many other such adaptations will have to be developed and made available to low-income women.

When opportunities for increasing incomes are found, new ways of providing skills and training must also be considered. Rural West African women with little or no formal education usually are not thought of as candidates for foreign training probably because such training is often thought of in traditional terms: high cost, formally structured classroom learning in French or English. Clearly international travel will be an exception, but where visits to neighboring countries can be useful and cost-effective, they should be encouraged. In this program a variation on traditional tie-dyeing apprenticeships was used in a physical environment similar to the one in which participants work in Mali. Other training methods will have to be adapted according to the skills and situation involved.

APPENDIX I The Training Program - A detailed Account

The Gambian organizers began taking steps to implement the training program about ten days before the Malians arrival. The participating dyers had decided to teach two or three patterns each morning and patterns were assigned to each dyer. With a cash advance from the AFSC, GAMCO staff purchased the necessary equipment (buckets, bowls, charcoal stoves, and an initial supply of cloth, dyes and chemicals) and each dyer independently tied samples of the techniques she planned to teach. On two subsequent occasions the dyers met together to dye their samples. Training program staff had hoped that teaching technuques could be discussed during these two dyeing sessions but this proved impossible in the crush of charcoal fires, steaming dyes and the enthusiasm generated by group dyeing.

After samples had been dyed the AFSC staff chose among the many patterns, determining which would be new for the Malians. Having previously worked with Malian dyers, Valerie Kelly knew generally which patterns were already in the Malian repertoire. Rather than excluding Gambian dyers whose patterns had been rejected, these dyers were assigned variations of the pattern or demonstrations in the use of difficult color combinations. This resulted in minor duplications in teaching but included as many teachers as possible in an attempt to reinforce the cooperatives cohesiveness. Additionally, a daily teaching schedule, based on the availability of Gambian women and the difficulty of the techniques to be taught was agreed upon. Schedules were distributed to all participants.

During this week before the Malians' arrival, staff completed other necessary arrangements: purchasing supplies and preparing cloth, renting a house with a large yard in which the dyeing took place, arranging the preparation of communal lunches for the participants. Also during this week staff visited the five families in Banjul, Bakau and Serrekunda who lodged the Malian visitors, explaining to them the details & purpose of of the Malians' stay.

The Malian participants arrived in Bamako from their homes on Friday, June 3 to finish vaccination and other pre-departure preparations. Working outside the capital city, most participants only visit Bamako occasionally and only one had previously traveled outside Mali. Meeting together in Bamako they visited the store created to sell the cloth produced at their rural centers. Visiting the store with two of its workers, Haby Sy and Joanne Saltet, the participants saw for the first time how their cloth was displayed and how their work compared with that of other rural centers.

Traveling to Banjul proved to be more difficult than anticipated: first a train strike and then the last minute cancellation of the weekly Air Mali Bamako-Banjul flight caused twelve determined Malians to straggle into Banjul Tuesday, June 7, two days late, having flown via Dakar on air tickets valid for different cities on different airlines.

Training began on Wednesday, June 8 and a daily routine was established. At 9 a.m. the Malians arrived at the training site from their "homes" along with the Gambian teachers. Seated on mats in the yard, the trainees divided themselves into groups with a teacher who demonstrated the new pattern on a one yard square of cloth. When a trainee had mastered one technique she moved to another group and teacher for a second stitch. Quick learners were able to learn three techniques in a morning. At about 11:30 the dye

baths were prepared, the samples dyed and the results examined and critized. A one o'clock lunch and a rest break followed.

As explained above, the entire day was devoted to learning new techniques. Afternoons were spent mastering techniques learned in the morning, with the trainees helping one another as necessary. The Malians prepared large notebooks containing dyed samples illustrating each technique for use in teaching the members of their centers upon return to Mali.

In general the teaching went well. For particularly difficult stitches second sessions with a given teacher were arranged. When participants noticed interesting designs worn by Gambians these were incorporated into the teaching schedule. This flexibility was important to the Malians as they felt strongly that access to the same knowledge would not have been available had Gambian teachers gone to Mali. On one occasion a Gambian "taught" the stitch demonstrated in her sample only to have the finished pieces fail to resemble the original. She then admitted with some embarassment that she had not sewn the sample herself and offered to take a group of Malians to the Sarakolé man who had stitched her sample; on Sunday morning the group visited the man's nearby compound and learned the stitch.

In addition to techniques of cloth manipulation, the Malians learned new ways to combine colors using successive dye baths rather than mixing powders. While no specific sessions in quality control were held, constant exposure to Gambian dyeing over the ten day period seems to have resulted in higher and more consistent quality production among the Malians. In any case the concept of quality control now has been accepted and instituted: at an August meeting in Bamako representatives of the dyeing centers agreed that cloth below certain standards would not be accepted for sale.

Despite language barriers participants managed to communicate effectively. Communication was generally in Gambian Mandinka and Malian Bambara. Problems arose with Wolof speakers which were resolved in a variety of ways. Occasionally staff translated using English and French but this was not always a solution for some Wolof speakers spoke little English and some Malians virtually no French. One Gambian family and their Malian visitor found Fulani to be a common language. Another Gambian of Malian origin spoke only Wolof and English but her family members all spoke French and served as interpreters.

The ten day period of training approached the maximum feasible length. In evaluation discussions afterwards, the Gambians felt that too much had been taught too quickly. They suggested that the Malians should have stayed for at least a full month (or better yet return for another three months). Including time spent traveling, however, the Malians were away from home and family for over two weeks -- a considerable period for these non-elite women with family responsibilities. While it is true that not everyone learned every stitch, most of the Malians, as evidenced by cloth now reaching the Bamako outlet, learned a number of new stitches and learned them well enough to teach others.

While eight of the Malians were spending their days tie-dyeing, two others spent their entire stay living and working with Ami Kurbally a batik designer in Bakau. Thanks to Ami Kurbally's willingness to give them her careful attention, Aissitan Traoré of Markala and Suzanne Diarra of the Community Development Center San, received a complete course in the basics

of batik production. The enthusiasm of Ami Kurbally and her team about the progress of the Malians led them to ask that their students extend their stay. After the eight tie-dyers left for Mali, Aissitan Traoré and Suzanne Diarra remained an extra week continuing their training. They are now starting batik production in their respective centers, the first such production in Mali.

During their stay the participants visited local markets and dyeing workshops in addition to excursions with their Gambian families. On their last day they were guests at two receptions, one held by the Malian community living in Banjul and the other by members of GAMCO.

At the GAMCO reception Gambian dyers examined Malian mudcloth and asked questions about the lengthy process needed to produce it. Although the mudcloth provoked a definite respect for the Malians as fellow craftswomen, most Gambians, quite realistically, were not interested in learning such a difficult skill. The GAMCO committee members, however, discussed the possibility of importing mudcloth from the Malian centers for sale by GAMCO.

APPENDIX II Training Program Participants

Malian Participants

Aissatan Traoré, Pilot Artisan Center, Markala
Suzanne Diarra, Community Development Center, San
Ouarabadié Samaké, Rural Animation Center, Ouelessebougou
Sefa Coulibaly, Rural Animation Center, Sirakorola
Diara Coulibaly, Rural Animation Center, Yangasso
Haoua Diarra, Pilot Artisan Center, Markala
Assitan Coumaré, Community Development Center, Sansanding
Fatoumata Dabo, Community Development Center, Tamani
Aminta Abdoulaye, Tin Aicha Project

Mariam Thiam, Director of Training for Women, National Direction for Rural Education and Animation, Bamako
Aminata Diawara, Head, Community Development Program, Operation Rice, Segou

Gambian Participants

Fatou Job, Perseverance St., Banjul
Kinneh M'Bye, Serrekunda
Isatu Dabbo, Box Bar Street, Banjul
Adam Mamburray, Box Bar Street, Banjul
Awa Jah, Leman St., Banjul
N'Dey Secka, Gloucester St., Banjul
Yaye M'Bai Gaye, Hagan St. Banjul
N'Dey Cham, Box Bar Street, Banjul
Swadi Jallow, Bakau
N'Dunbeh N'Jie, Serrekunda
Ami Kurbally, Bakau
Binta N'Jie, Hagan St., Banjul
Fanta Koroba, Box Bar Street, Banjul
Safi Gaye, Bakau
Magu Khan, Serrekunda

Staff

Isatu N'Jie, IBAS/GAMCO
Susanna Badgley, IBAS/GAMCO
Gerry Goodrich, AFSC Dakar
Valerie Kelly, special consultant to AFSC Dakar
Susan Caughman, AFSC Dakar

APPENDIX III: Statement of Expenses

Category	Cost - CFA	Cost - $	% of total
1. Transportation: (Plane tickets, ferry, taxi, gas visas, taxes, train, other)	768,627	3,137.26	48.3
2. Malian Trainee related Expenses: (Pocket money, food, housing, etc.)	229,111	935.14	14.3
3. Training Session related Expenses: (Salaries of Gambian teachers, cloth, dyes, other materials, misc.)	263,861	1,076.99	16.6
4. Training Site: Rent, Utilities (House rental, water, electricity, telephone)	90,847	370.81	5.7
5. Administration: (Administrative costs, telegrams, staff related costs of food and maintenance)	179,935	734.43	11.3
6. Miscellaneous	61,141	249.56	3.8
	1,593,522 cfa	$6,540.19	100.

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APPENDIX IV: Excerpts from a Radio Gambia Broadcast-June 19, 1977 (from Wolof)

Radio Gambia staff: Sarah Goddard, Faama, Fatou and Aissatou

Guests: Ami Kurbally, Gambian batik creator and host to: Aissitan Traoré
from the Pilot Artisanal Center of Markala, Mali
Suzanne Diarra, from the Community Development Center, San, Mali

Sarah: Friends and listeners, especially our women listeners, we are going to talk with women today. In our group today we have Ami Kurbally, a Gambian from Bakau, New Town. Ami Kurbally came today with her two friends from Mali. Their names are Suzanne Diarra and Aissitan Traoré.

Ami, I'd like to know how the company you call GAMCO works.

Ami: We created GAMCO in order to achieve success the way that Musa Keba (a well-known tye-dyer in The Gambia) has. We who formed GAMCO decided that we wanted to join together to become known. We didn't want to remain sitting at home with nothing to do (i.e. earning nothing). But GAMCO members can still sell in the market as well as to the cooperative.

Sarah: After Ami, we will hear from Suzanne and Aissitan from Mali. Now I'll leave the microphone to Fatou, Faama and Aissata who are going to ask Ami Kurbally what has been the purpose of the visit of these women to The Gambia and also what kind of work Ami does.

Fatou: Thank you, Sarah. Ami, welcome to our program. You have guests from Mali. They came here and I know that Mali is far from The Gambia. Their coming here today is an honor for Gambian women. We are going to talk with them about what these women are doing here. It is said that one is never too old to learn; that is true and a woman is never old. Whatever her age a woman is always intelligent. Whatever her age a person can help herself. And if you can demonstrate this to our listeners in Gambia and other countries, not only us but everyone listening to Radio Gambia today will be able to benefit. I would like you to show our listeners that women are ready to work, to cooperate and to exchange ideas because a selfish person could never do the work you are doing. You could limit your knowledge to The Gambia but no, you have invited strangers who will not be able to hide what they have learned from you. We'll talk with these Malian women and I hope they will speak in their own language and tell us what work they are doing.

Ami: Thank you for your kind words. What brought these Malian women here is our dyeing. Every women knows how to do something productive. If a woman attaches her skirt tightly she is like a man who attaches well his pants and that is what we women today must do (men attach pants tightly before starting work, i.e. if women attach their skirts tightly they can be as productive as men). These Malian women left their families, husbands and everything to come here in search of knowledge. I'm ready to help them acquire new skills because I had no way to earn a living once, before someone taught me my skills so that I could support my family, my children and everyone. Therefore if someone like me leaves her country to come in search of the knowledge that I have, I must teach her what I know so that on her return she can support her family also. Since the arrival of these women I am satisfied with their work and what I have been able to teach them.

The work that I do, "batik", is beautiful. It is a kind of picture which tourists buy to decorate their houses. My own knowledge of this technique is only superficial but I decided that I had to do something to help my family even though my knowledge wasn't complete and even though I am a woman. That's where I was when these women arrived from another country to learn from me.

Fatou: Thank you Ami. I think that what Ami has said is very noble because one could have a profession and keep it selfishly for oneself. Actually Ami could sit at home selling her work to tourists and Africans alike and making a lot of money for herself alone. But Ami has called other women to learn from her and work with her. Thank you Ami I think that if all women did what you are doing we women would all have acquired useful knowledge because knowledge is never far away, it is only hidden from us.

If a woman is intelligent understands easily what is explained to her. I hope all you women who don't have any skills, don't know how to dye, nothing, simply because you have never been taught will listen because too many people think that if you don't go to an office early in the morning then there is no other way to earn a living. But there are many women who have no offices to go to who if they came to you could learn something. There is other work besides work in offices. There are women who have been to school but think that if they don't have an office job there is nothing to do. I think this attitude is one of ignorance and it keeps us behind. Anything which earns money is a respectable profession whether it is hairdressing, dyeing or sewing.

Because of your frankness Ami you have guests from Mali who will spread your knowledge once they have learned your skills and returned to their country, other women will come to them from countries farther away than Mali and they will teach those women your knowledge. That is why we can only thank you.

Sarah: Thank you Fatou and Ami. Now I'll let the strangers tell why they have come. They'll tell our countrywomen what they are doing and what the goal of their trip has been. We'll let Suzanne D. Speak in her language (Bambara) because I'm sure all women are listening to this program wherever they live.

Suzanne D. (in Bambara) Greetings to the women of Gambia. First I must thank the Gambian government, the Gambian women and especially the women who are teaching these skills. We left Mali a week ago and twelve of us came here of whom 8 are doing tie-dyeing and 2 batik. That is Aissitan Traoré and myself. We work everyday with Ami Kurbally. We are very happy with our stay in Gambia. We have been received here with peace and honor. The women have abandoned their work, their households to teach us to dye. We are making our strongest efforts to learn this work while we are here. I would especially like to thank my hostess Ami Kurbally and her husband. Ami Kurbally teaches us batik in her workshop. At night we take notes on the colors that we have used during the day so that we won't forget anything when we return to Mali. So we thank Ami Kurbally and hope that Allah will repay her for ther collaboration. Thanks also to all the Gambian women who have received us as their sisters.

Aissitan T. (in Bambara) Gambian friends, men and women, old and young, we greet you. Our greetings go also to our fellow countrymen living in The Gambia. Let me thank first the President of The Gambia and the Gambian government. From the moment of our departure from Mali we have had no problems anywhere from the airport of Dakar to the airport in The Gambia. Everywhere we have been well received. Therefore we thank all the Gambian people. With our hostess Ami we have received nothing but peace and hospitality. We are working on batiks in Ami's workshop. Ever since our arrival she has worked with us with an open heart, what she knows is what she is teaching us and we are working hard to learn what she teaches us. As my friend Suzanne said, after work we take notes on what we have learned that day. Thus after we return to Mali we will know how to practice what we have learned and how to teach it. Thank you all.

Notes

1. Malick Sene, "Un Projet d'Allegement du Travail des Femmes au Mali", Carnets de l'Enfrance UNICEF, 36, October 1976.

2. See for example Achola Pala, African Women in Rural Development, OLC Paper No. 12, December 1976; Ester Boserup, Woman's Role in Economic Development, London 1970; or Rural Africana, No. 29, Winter 1975-76, special issue on "Rural Women: Development or Underdevelopment?".

3. P. van den Oever, La Formation de la Femme Rurale au Mali, January 1975, Projet PNUD/BIT MALI 72/006.

4. Rapport de Synthèse Campagne Agricole 1975-6 Operation Riz Segou, Bamako, Ministere du Developpement Rural, Direction National de l'Agriculture.

5. P. van den Oever, "Peasant's Wives, Production and Progress" unpublished paper, 1976 contains a full description of the Mali handicraft program written by one intimately involved in its creation.

6. See Jasleen Dhamija, "Handicrafts: A Source of Employment for Women in Developing Rural Economies," International Labour Review, Vol. 112, No. 6, Dec. 1975 for a general discussion of the advantages of handicrafts as a revenue source for Third World women.

7. These were addressed at a meeting held in Bamako in November 1975 described in P. van den Oever, "Artisanat et Gestion des Petites Entreprises," 1975.

8. This situation is similar to the one described in Barbara C. Lewis, "The Limitations of Group Action Among Entrepreneurs: The Market Women of Abidjan, Ivory Coast." in Women in Africa eds. Edna Bay and Nancy Hafkin, Stanford 1976. Certain individual dyers in Banjul have become wealthy primarily because of access to capital and skillful management.

9. Monique Lestrange, "les Sarankolé de Badyar (techniques de teinturiers)", Etudes Guineennes, No. 6, 1950.

10. This decline in the importance of indigo has probably diminished Sarakolé women's control over the cloth economy.

11. GAMCO, 11 Hill St., Banuul, The Gambia

12. Radio Gambia program, June 19, 1977. Program text translated from Wolof and Bambara by Cheikna Sangaré.